CANADIAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT

2009-2010

Report on Plans and Priorities

The Honourable Josée Verner
President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister for La Francophonie

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW

Agency Head's Message

The multilateral intergovernmental conference is a key component of Canadian federalism. It is a critical instrument for consultation, coordination, negotiation and agreement among federal, provincial and territorial governments.

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) was created by the First Ministers of Canada in 1973. It is an agency of both the federal and provincial governments that provides administrative services for the planning and conduct of senior level federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences held throughout Canada.

In addition to the increasingly important cost efficiencies and the economies of scale which governments can achieve through the utilization of CICS, the Secretariat also offers the clear advantages of confidentiality, continuity, neutrality and expertise in the planning and organization of senior level intergovernmental meetings in Canada. Overall, the requests for the agency's services have increased consistently in recent years although the last two fiscal years have seen a reduction in the number of conferences served due to the Canadian political environment.

In 2009-2010, the Secretariat will continue providing pertinent, expert and cost-effective services to governments. These services are provided by experienced, well-trained and highly professional staff consisting of employees from federal, provincial and territorial governments. CICS will also continue to develop innovative and flexible policies and procedures, which encompass the optimal utilization of resources, and includes making use of the latest technological developments, in order to provide our clients with the highest standard of services.

André M. McArdle
Secretary

Summary Information

Raison d'être

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) was established pursuant to an agreement reached at the May 1973 First Ministers' Conference and designated a department of the federal government by an Order-in-Council dated November 29, 1973. Its one-program mandate is to provide administrative services for the planning and conduct of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers level federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences.

The CICS is an agency of the federal, provincial and territorial governments and, as such, acts as a neutral intergovernmental body. Its budget is supported by both orders of government and its staff includes federal, provincial and territorial public servants. The Secretary reports to all governments annually. The operations are reviewed by federal, provincial and territorial senior officials designated by their respective First Ministers. The CICS reports to Parliament through the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada.

Organizational Information

Given that CICS reports to fourteen governments, it must be careful to ensure that its services remain impartial, confidential and equitable to all its clients.

It should be noted that CICS does not convene intergovernmental meetings. It is called upon to respond to decisions taken by governments to meet on key national or specific issues. Decisions concerning the location of such meetings, their number in a given fiscal year, their timing and duration, are all factors beyond the control of CICS.

CICS services are designed to assisting pre-conference planning and coordination; as well as the set-up of conference site facilities and services. Its conference site services include secretaryship; interpretation; the translation, printing, distribution and control of documents; media relations; security; and the provision of technical equipment and secretarial and technical assistance which includes informatics.

In addition to the above conference services which can be made available anywhere in Canada, a document archives is maintained by the Secretariat for the use of governments. The Secretariat also has its world wide web site containing not only pertinent information on the organization and its activities, but most importantly, conference communiqués released immediately after the close of major conferences it serves.

Strategic Outcomes and Program Activity Architecture

The mandate of CICS is to serve federal, provincial and territorial governments and Canadians in the planning, conduct, and the serving of senior level intergovernmental conferences. Its primary objective is to relieve client departments in virtually every major sector of governmental activity

of the numerous technical and administrative tasks associated with the planning and conducting of such conferences, thereby enabling them to concentrate on the substantive policy issues. CICS provides continuous, effective, impartial administrative services to these meetings on key intergovernmental issues encompassing numerous sectors of intergovernmental activity.

Directly related to this mandate and objective, CICS has one central strategic outcome, which is discussed in this document: Multilateral meetings of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers are planned and conducted flawlessly.

Program Activity Architecture

	PAA Level	Performance Information: Expected Results
Department/Agency	**Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat**	**Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat**
Strategic Outcomes	Flawlessly planned and conducted events, including effectively addressing unforeseen challenges.	
Program Activity (Main Estimates Presentation Format)	1. Conference Services	CICS is viewed as the provider of choice for intergovernmental conference services.
		Needs of all parties involved in intergovernmental conferences served by CICS are understood and addressed / met.

Planning Summary

CICS' key priority for 2009-2010 is to plan, conduct and serve intergovernmental conferences at the most senior level in response to requests by federal, provincial and territorial governments. The Secretariat is funded at a level sufficient to finance conference activity in the 110-120 range.

Credibility for an organization such as CICS is based on performance, and performance of the highest standard is required at all times. As a result, CICS is constantly looking for ways to enhance its level of client service.

Within the agency, standards and practices in conference planning and delivery will be given continued focus. Customized policies and tools continue to be developed to meet evolving business needs in an intergovernmental environment. A variety of strategies that promote the sharing of noteworthy practices, tools and new initiatives will be pursued. There is also a commitment to capture corporate knowledge relating to both the serving of intergovernmental

conferences generally as well as the particularities of the individual sectors we serve. CICS will also strengthen its focus on lessons learned; balancing this perspective not only on its successes but also on the challenges it has faced going forward.

To resolve some of the challenges associated with recruitment and retention affecting governments in general, and in order to identify its current and future human resources requirements, CICS developed its first Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan for 2007-2010. This document and its recommendations will serve as a tool to support Senior Management decision-making and provide effective strategic direction to support delivery of results. It will help to find a better balance between CICS short-term and long term priorities, while maximizing opportunities and overcoming challenges such as succession planning in a more complex intergovernmental environment.

In May 2008, CICS launched a modernization project which has gained a high level of commitment from management and employees alike. The project is aimed at examining and building further efficiencies in the internal operations and practices of the agency in order to ensure services to the clients remain of the highest order now and in the future. In 2009-10, the CICS Modernization Project Implementation Plan will implement a series of improvements to the CICS business environment, designed to modernize the management of human resources, and the management of key business processes. In effect, what began as an organizational review and succession planning project has evolved into a collection of sound management principles in project and change management, designed to assist with modernizing CICS operations, and setting the direction for change in the future.

CICS' performance in achieving its strategic objectives will continue to be supported by a strengthened planning, performance and reporting framework, in order to ensure its program focuses on results, delivers value for money, and is consistent with intergovernmental expectations and priorities. In the context of greater government accountability, CICS has moved to a more comprehensive results-focused accountability framework for reporting financial and non-financial information.

CICS will also ensure that emergency and business continuity plans and procedures are developed, integrated, tested and kept up to date over the 2009-10 fiscal year in order to:
- prevent or limit injury to personnel, information and other assets;
- effectively respond to and recover from emergencies;
- continue the delivery of essential and critical services and functions until resumption of normal operations; and
- augment security in increased threat situations.

Given the amount of travel conducted by CICS employees in the conduct of their business, a Pandemic Influenza Plan will also be developed as part of the Business Continuity Plan.

Last but not least, CICS will ensure that it remains at the leading edge of technology and integrates new and effective tools and techniques within a "Greening in Government" policy perspective.

CICS aims for the highest quality of services to governments. As such, CICS will continue to examine its management practices and strengthen its overall accountability in order to remain the provider of choice for intergovernmental conference support services.

Financial Resources ($ millions)		
2008-09	**2009-10**	**2010-11**
6.5	6.5	6.5

Human Resources (Full-Time Equivalent – FTE)		
2008-09	**2009-10**	**2010-11**
36	36	36

Strategic Outcome 1: Multilateral meetings of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers are planned and conducted flawlessly.	
Performance Indicators	**Targets**
Extent to which senior government officials are satisfied with various CICS services in the planning and conduct of multilateral meetings of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers.	95% - High degree of stakeholder trust and confidence in CICS' institutional, independent role and high degree of satisfaction with CICS services.

Program Activity	**Forecast Spending 2008-09**	**Planned Spending**			**Alignment to Government of Canada Outcomes**
		2009-10	**2010-11**	**2011-12**	
Intergovernmental Conference Services	$6.5M	$6.5M	$6.5M	$6.5M	Contributes to the achievement of Government Affairs: support synergies, dialogue, efficient and effective interaction among government sectors in the intergovernmental environment through the provision of impartial conference and information management support services.
Total	$6.5M	$6.5M	$6.5M	$6.5M	

Contribution of Priorities to Strategic Outcome

Operational Priorities	Type	Links to Strategic Outcome	Description
Analysis, continuous improvement and documentation of practices and procedures, including the updating of tools used in the planning and conduct of intergovernmental conferences.	Ongoing, but escalated.	Updated tools and well articulated, consistent processes and procedures will contribute directly to the planning and conduct of flawless events.	**Why is this a priority?** - A means to capture corporate memory, record best practices and encourage innovation within the organization - To ensure that intergovernmental clients receive the highest quality of services from year to year and from sector to sector despite staff turnover. **Plans for meeting the priority** - Establishment of Communities of Practice - Business process review - Mentoring of new employees - Establishment of Exit interviews and on-boarding strategies

Management Priorities	Type	Links to Strategic Outcome	Description
Implementation of the CICS Modernization Project	Ongoing	The implementation of the Modernization Project will bring a series of improvements to the CICS business environment and operations enabling the Secretariat to achieve its strategic outcome in the most effective and efficient manner possible.	**Why is this a priority?** - CICS Management is committed to ensuring a proactive approach to change and preparation for the future - CICS Management is committed to a holistic approach to planning and improvement - Current challenges in the area of human resources and increased client demands necessitate thoughtful planning and change **Plans for meeting the priority** - Active engagement of all staff - Establishment of project teams around 8 priority initiatives - Establishment of a Steering Committee to provide leadership, maintain direction and momentum and to oversee all initiatives.

RISK ANALYSIS

As previously noted, CICS was established pursuant to an agreement reached at the May 1973 First Ministers` Conference and although designated a federal department for the purposes of the Financial Administration Act, by an Order-in-Council on November 29, 1973. The organization is in fact an agency of the federal and provincial governments and, as such, acts as a neutral intergovernmental body. Not only is its budget supported by these two orders of government, but its staff is also selected from both federal and provincial/territorial governments.

The Secretariat is funded annually at a level sufficient to finance a level of conference activity in the 110-120 range. The requests for the agency's services have increased significantly in recent years and we have averaged over 100 conferences served annually in the last five years.

Given that CICS reports to all governments, it must be careful to ensure that its services not only remain impartial, confidential and equitable to all clients but that they be perceived as such in an

environment that can be highly political. As a result, CICS has always been cognizant of the importance of risk management issues and continues to make steady progress towards effective implementation of integrated risk management. CICS' three highest risks continue to be:

1) maintaining the credibility of CICS as a neutral conference service provider;
2) maintaining continuity of CICS' conference services capability and supporting infrastructure; and
3) maintaining due diligence and reporting on appropriate controls, given growing requirements of modern comptrollership.

Working Environment

CICS' priorities depend in large part on federal, provincial and territorial governments' priorities and are subject to a variety of internal and external influences.

External factors which influenced the Agency's activities in 2008-09 included, for example, a lower number of intergovernmental conference held in all regions of Canada. As an organization that services the intergovernmental conference activities undertaken by 14 jurisdictions and their respective departments, CICS has no control over the timing, location and costs of such meetings. In times of volatility in leadership of governments, such as in the last two years, activities can decline while departments await a firmer mandate and direction. At other times requests for services can rise dramatically, and are subject to a strong degree of seasonality.

It is important to recall that CICS does not convene intergovernmental meetings. It is called upon to respond to decisions taken by governments to meet on key national or specific issues. Decisions concerning the location of such meetings, their number in a given fiscal year, their timing and duration are all factors beyond the control of the Secretariat. The level of CICS expenditures for each fiscal year is, however, directly affected by these factors. As such, in its strategic planning, the agency must respond not only to changes in the external environment, but also to priorities, opportunities and constraints within the governments' contexts.

CICS has also always been characterized by the cyclical nature of is work, with request for conference support peaking during the months of May and June and once again during the months of September and October. With investments in financial resources and personnel needed to ensure efficient and timely services being fairly fixed, an extended period of lower or higher than usual conference activity creates a set of operational challenges that require flexibility in the approach to the optimization of outcomes and uses of resources within the Secretariat. Cross-training of staff from other sectors of CICS (Information Services and Corporate Services) on conference serving was started many years ago as a coping measure to serve conferences at peak periods each year.

Working in a nation that spans three oceans and six time zones in and of itself presents organizations such as CICS with unique challenges. CICS provides administrative services as requested in planning and executing senior level conferences on issues of significant importance to the well-being and prosperity of all Canadians. As such, the unique value that the Secretariat brings to these key intergovernmental meetings, in terms of experience, professionalism, non-partisanship, and consistency is a key factor that contributes to their overall successes.

Risks to the strategic direction of the Secretariat and to the efficient and effective management of its conference program remain fairly static over time: access to qualified personnel; retention of corporate memory and practices; cost structure changes related to major expenses of the Secretariat; and the ability to react and adjust to expansions and contractions within the requests for CICS services.

The flawless delivery of high quality services to clients is only made possible by the total dedication and commitment of the agency's personnel, personnel which possesses the aptitudes, character and devotion necessary for CICS operations. As an agency of both the federal and provincial governments, the organization is staffed by a blend of federal, provincial and territorial employees. Provincial and territorial employees are seconded to the Secretariat for a period of three to four years. Recruitment in this environment is executed through a variety of processes and the availability of skilled personnel is partly a function of market forces and trends beyond the control of CICS.

Creative and diligent approaches in seeking quality employees have yielded excellent staffing results over time. CICS will continue to actively pursue top talent through various initiatives and strategies as an integral component of its human resources strategy.

Retention of corporate memory and conference practices and procedures are fundamental to the success of the Secretariat in carrying out its mandate. The efficient execution of conference planning and support comes from having successfully delivered high quality services to a variety of clients in over 30 sectors of intergovernmental activity. The Secretariat's departmental clients are also subject to high turnover rates among the staff assigned to conference planning. Consequently, CICS staff has been instrumental in providing new contacts pertinent information on the process of intergovernmental machinery.

The majority of senior level intergovernmental meetings occur outside of government facilities and outside of the National Capital Region where the offices of CICS are located. Consequently, a significant portion of the operational budget of CICS is allocated to travel, accommodation, movement of equipment, and rentals. These costs are market-driven, and, as such, are subject to significant fluctuations (usually increases) where competitive and fuel-related factors are in play. To the extent that general pricing increases do not lead to declines in conference activity, the costs of doing business, and the ability to remain within budgetary constraints is to a degree beyond the control of CICS. Fortunately, CICS activity level and allotment budgets have not been in conflict in recent years, and consequently cost structures have remained fairly stable.

Integrated Risk Management Approach (IRM)

Organizations such as CICS have unique governance structures that define the corporate context and practices within which organizational and strategic risks can be managed proactively. The governance structure itself builds in checks and balances related to confidentiality and impartiality. By its very scope and nature, it also creates an operating environment that must work in an integrated fashion.

Because of CICS unique arms-length mandate and its small size, it is critical that Senior Management in organizations such as CICS be engaged throughout the business and human

resources planning processes, in order to provide direction and guidance, and to outline management's expectations. For example, requests for conference services, information management and information technology requirements, financial matters and staffing requirements have always been standing agenda items at monthly CICS senior management meetings. They reflect how priorities and directions ought to be set, how allocation and re-allocation decisions ought to be made, and how programs ought to be coordinated and managed to achieve the strategic outcome(s) expected.

The more strategic discussions relating to organizational wide corporate risk, strategic planning and resource re-allocation are often held at the Executive Committee level, and within other internal committee meetings. CICS' Integrated Business Human Resources Plan, for example, encompasses the entire organization. It incorporates an analysis of CICS' operational environment, its internal and external pressures, as well as its recent staffing and business trends. It also identifies CICS key risk areas, and their potential impact on the organization. As such, the IBHRP allows management to better monitor these risks, create risk mitigation strategies and determine where priority focus is required based on business needs, workforce analysis and client service standards.

Greater formalization of its integrated planning and risk management approach

Reputation and credibility come from effectiveness. Senior Executive Management has recognized the need to find a better balance between CICS short-and long term priorities while maximizing opportunities and overcoming challenges such as succession planning, a more complex intergovernmental environment and new technologies and new concerns. In order to continue to fully deliver on its mandate, CICS must continue to strengthen its capacity to risk manage, to anticipate, to prepare for and respond to the changing intergovernmental environment and its clients needs.

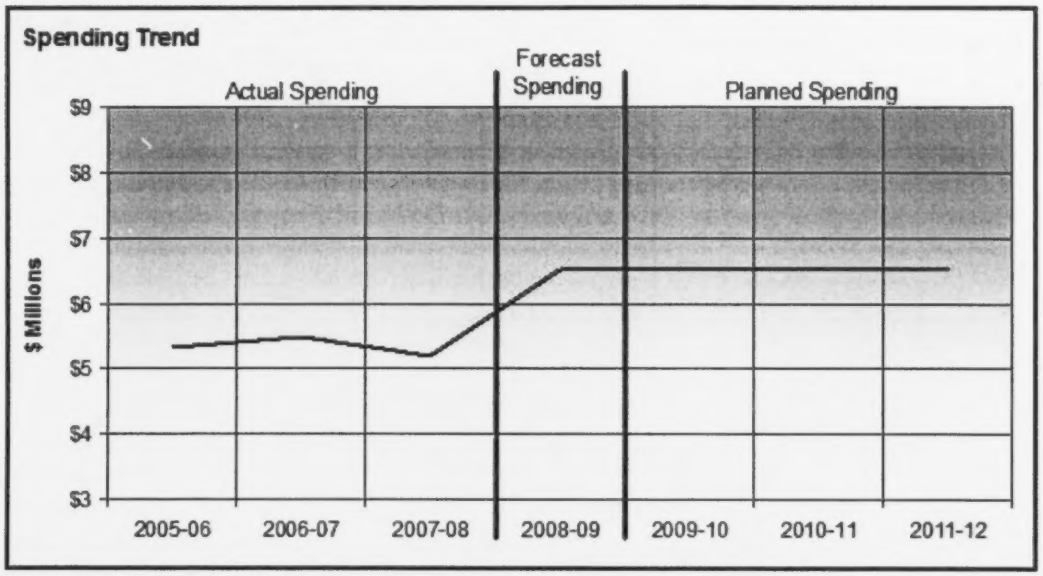
Within the context of these challenges and risks, CICS has utilized the recent decline in meeting activity to consolidate and restructure for the future. Initiatives have included implementing an integrated Human Resources Strategy, standardizing policies and procedures, formulating and executing a phased capital expenditure plan, and making strategic investments in training and development planning. As a consequence, the Secretariat stands more ready than ever to deliver the highest quality professional services in support of its government clients, and by extension, to the benefit of Canadians across the country.

The goal is to help CICS proactively identify risks at the policy development stage rather than when policies are implemented and to include risk management and mitigation strategies and lessons learned as an integral part of its operations.

Expenditure Profile

As a smaller Secretariat with a constant performance target, that being to be ready to have an organization in place to successfully deliver services for up to 120 distinct conferences annually, the spending of the directorate has usually come in under the estimated and allotted funding each year, as environmental circumstances have resulted in lower activity in recent periods. The following chart shows actual and anticipated spending, again with the anticipated spending set

for activity level of in the area of 120 conferences, and the actual spending in recent years was lower, since conference activity has been below the 120 level.



Voted and Statutory Items displayed in the Main Estimates ($ millions)			
Vote # or Statutory Item (S)	**Truncated Vote or Statutory Wording**	**2008-09 Main Estimates**	**2009-10 Main Estimates**
5	Program Expenditures	6.1	6.1
(S)	Contributions to employee benefit plans	0.4	0.4
Total		6.5	6.5

SECTION II – ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME

Analysis by Program Activity

Strategic Outcome: Multilateral meetings of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers are planned and conducted flawlessly.

Program Activity Name: Conference Services

Program Activity Description:

Provision of expert, impartial support services for the planning and conduct of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers level federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences.

The CICS does not convene intergovernmental meetings. It is called upon to respond to decisions taken by governments to meet on key national or specific issues. Decisions concerning the location of such meetings, their number in a given fiscal year, their timing and duration, are all factors, beyond the control of the Secretariat. The level of CICS expenditures for each fiscal year is, however, directly affected by these factors.

Over the next three years, the Secretariat projects serving approximately 110 to 120 conferences per year.

Program Activity: Conference Services					
Human Resources (FTEs) and Planned Spending ($ millions)					
2009–10		2010–11		2011–12	
FTEs	Planned Spending	FTEs	Planned Spending	FTEs	Planned Spending
20	4.3	20	4.3	20	4.3

Program Activity Expected Results	Performance Indicators	Targets
Flawlessly planned and conducted events.	Survey results, client satisfaction letters, number of client departments utilizing the services is maintained or expanded.	To maintain the highest degree of customer satisfaction

Program Activity Name: Internal Services

Program Activity Description:

Provision of support, in managerial, financial, administrative, information management, information technology and human resources, to the agency in the performance of its mandate.

Program Activity: Internal Services					
Human Resources (FTEs) and Planned Spending ($ millions)					
2009–10		2010–11		2011–12	
FTEs	Planned Spending	FTEs	Planned Spending	FTEs	Planned Spending
16	2.2	16	2.2	16	2.2

Program Activity Expected Results	Performance Indicators	Targets
Effective support of Conference services in providing services to senior level intergovernmental meetings and to the Executive branch in meeting the organization's corporate obligations, as an agency of the government of Canada. Internal support activities enable Conference Services to deliver high quality services to governments. Internal Services is also instrumental in delivering timely and accurate reporting to central agencies within prescribed deadlines.	Favourable client survey results, audit reports, central agencies reports.	Ensuring the highest degree of satisfaction in meeting client needs and in meeting the agency's corporate obligations.
Provide sound management and careful stewardship of assets, financial and human resources, and IT services, in accordance with principles of modern controllership.	Positive reviews and audit results	Strong evidence of sound management in these regards.

RPP – Planning Highlights

The Secretariat will benefit from the increasingly standardized and strategic practices garnered from the Integrated Business Human Resources Plan and implementation of Best Practices principles.

Improvement of human resources practices within Conference Services through strategic recruiting and systematic training and mentorship will heighten the capabilities of CICS to reach the objective of flawlessly serving senior level intergovernmental meetings.

The CICS Modernization Implementation Plan will operationalize a series of improvement to the CICS business environment, designed to modernize the management of human resources and the management of key business processes. This will assist CICS reflect on how priorities and directions ought to be set, how allocation and reallocation decisions ought to be made, and how progress ought to be coordinated and managed to achieve the strategic outcomes expected.

CICS will also maintain a sound overall approach to its unique collection of intergovernmental conference documents, which span virtually every sector of intergovernmental activity, and is the only comprehensive archive of its kind in Canada.

CICS' key priority for 2009-10 will continue to be that of planning, conducting and serving intergovernmental conferences at the most senior level in response to requests by governments.

Benefits to Canadians

The planning and conducting of multilateral meetings of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers is a service which elevates a core principle of democratic society, communication, and is a critical component of the workings of the Canadian federation.

By skilfully and professionally executing planning and delivery of these meetings, CICS allows these entities to address pertinent issues without getting distracted by process, with significant risk of error and omission taken out of the equation by tapping into our experience and impartiality, and with efficiency and effectiveness enhanced by technical expertise and an understanding of what should be done and when.

The interests of every Canadian are represented by several levels of government within their respective jurisdiction. The success of each level in meeting its mandates is dependent on the successes of the whole in determining the course on national and provincial/territorial policies, and addressing these needs through cooperation and negotiation.

As a multilateral body dedicated to supporting events that give rise to, and support the spirit of cooperation and negotiation among governments, CICS seeks to execute its part in these processes to maximum effect, producing an environment wherein the opportunity for rational discourse and optimal decision-making is at its highest, to the benefit of all Canadians.

SECTION III – LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

CICS Report on Plans and Priorities

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CICS Performance Report

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CICS WEB SITE

www.scics.gc.ca

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Mara Indri-Skinner
Assistant Secretary
Telephone: (613) 995-2344
E-mail: mindriskinner@scics.gc.ca